

Appl. No. 09/914,527
Atty. Docket No. 7471
Amdt. dated 1/14/2004
Reply to Office Action of 10/27/2003
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 9 has been canceled herewith. Claims 1-8 and 10 are now in the case.

Claims 1, 2, 8, and 10 have been amended to replace the European style "characterizing" language with "comprising." Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to recite the use of the aqueous coating solution or slurry comprising water in the coating step. Basis is in the claims as originally presented, and at page 9, line 25 and Examples I and II (coating solutions). Claims 1 and 10 have further been amended to recite the removal of said water. Basis for this drying step is at page 9, line 11. Claim 10 has been further amended to recite the reduction in surface area which can be achieved by the process. Basis is at page 10, last line. Claim 5 has been amended to correct a grammatical error. It is submitted that these amendments add no new matter, and entry is requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC 112

Claim 9 stands rejected under §112, for reasons of record at page 2 of the Office Action.

It is submitted that the cancellation of Claim 9 has obviated this rejection. There are no other formal objections or rejections outstanding.

Rejections Under 35 USC 103

Claims 1-8 and 10 stand rejected over WO 97/12955, for reasons of record at page 3 of the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections, to the extent they may apply to the claims as amended herewith.

It is submitted that the process of the present invention is quite different from that of the WO 97 document.

At the outset, it is noted that the present invention is intended to establish a coating on a pre-formed detergent core. The coating comprises a non-hydrating inorganic material, including the claimed carbonate/sulfates.

In sharp contrast, WO 97 incorporates the disclosed inorganic salts into the disclosed agglomerate. See Abstract and Examples I and II. With reference to the present process, that would amount to incorporating the salts into the pre-formed core, rather than applying the salts onto the core as a coating.

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Moreover, in the present coating process the inorganic salt is applied to the pre-formed core as a water-containing solution or slurry, which is subsequently dried to leave the inorganic salt as the core coating.

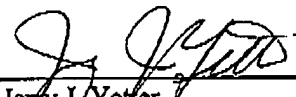
Again in sharp contrast with the present process, WO 97 teaches agglomerating a surfactant paste with a dry starting material, which includes the inorganic salt. See **Abstract** and Examples I and II.

To summarize: WO 97 is not directed to a coating process; nor does it employ an aqueous solution or slurry of the inorganic salt; nor does it coat a pre-formed core material, all in the manner of the present invention. Importantly, WO 97 neither teaches nor suggests the advantages of achieving a coating of the present type. Therefore, nothing in WO 97 would suggest any modification of its teachings in order to achieve such coating. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection on this basis should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In light of the forgoing, it is submitted that Claims 1-8 and 10 are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action in the case is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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